

Opposition, HB1508

Joint Technical Corrections Committee

November 9th, 2021

Hello, my name is Sophia Burroughs, and I am a student at the University of Mary, in my senior year of receiving my bachelor's in social work. I have been a practicing Catholic all my life, raised with a deep intellectual faith and love of God. I am writing in opposition to HB1508, and I would like to speak as a member of the greater Christian community who would be in support of racial equality and the history lessons that are needed to achieve this.

While I recognize that not all members of the Christian community submit themselves under the guidance of the Vatican, there is a larger wave of faith that follows what trickles down from such high places. We here in *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World) which was a papal encyclical published in 1965, that Christians are called to,

“Work untiringly to the end that fundamental economic and political decisions are taken, nationally and internationally, which will ensure the recognition and implementation everywhere of everyone’s right to human and civil culture in harmony with personal dignity, without distinction of race, sex, nation, religion, or social circumstances.”

Racism is contrary to the belief of any Christian. This we can all agree, but to believe that the only path forward is to forget our past is not the opinion of leaders of the Christian faith. In fact, it is the belief that we owe accountability to our past.

I will cite as well from the voice of The US Catholic Bishops in 1979 that,

“The structures of our society are subtly racist... The sin [of racism] is social in nature in that each of us, in varying degrees is responsible. All of us in some measures are accomplices.”

My last and final source to be cited will be from the voice of Patrick Saint-Jean a Priest and well-respected author in the church. He speaks about his personal support towards critical race theory.

“Instead of seeing CRT as a threat to the Catholic faith, we should recognize it as a powerful lens for examining who we are, both as Christians and as Americans. It sheds light on our divided nation, allowing us to see the historical factors that shaped who we are today. It helps identify what is admirable and dishonorable in our nation, and it gives a map to follow as we seek to build a better nation for ourselves and for our children.”

Part of today's discussion is whether we should teach personal responsibility to the crimes committed by those who came before us, but as Christians we teach this every day. One of the earliest lessons we learn is that of Adam and Eve, our mother and father in Christianity who

committed a sin that effected the rest of human history. I have by nature of my faith inherited the weight of their decisions. I have to live my life different because of the sins of others.

This bill requires that information only be factual, but the facts are that our history in America includes racism. I urge the committee, that if they are voting on behalf of a Christian population, that they vote in opposition to HB1508.

Sophia Burroughs

Student in the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Mary

109 Burleigh Ave Bismarck, ND 58504